

CHD Clarke (1909–1981)

1966 recipient of TWS Honorary Membership

Called the Canadian Aldo Leopold, C. H. D. Clarke not only worked to understand the ecology and management of wildlife but also to comprehend the social and economic interplay affecting wildlife and its management, a dimension avoided by most field-trained biologists. Clarke was born in Kerwood, Ontario in 1909. A precocious ornithologist at an early age, he completed his PhD on ruffed grouse populations in 1935 at the University of Toronto in the Department of Zoology. He went on to become supervisor of a provincial fish and game division and international consultant on wildlife matters. Beginning his career as a student of forestry in 1927, Clarke then did stints with Canadian National Parks and the Research Branch of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests. He became Supervisor of Wildlife in the Fish and Wildlife Division in 1947 and Chief of the Division in 1961. His classic work was on the Arctic, *A Biological Investigation of the Thelon Game Sanctuary*. Although the report had value as the first systematic and complete list of barren-ground vertebrates, it also provided important information on wildlife use by Inuit and northern Indians, and population cycles of fur-bearing mammals, caribou and muskoxen. In the section on caribou, Clarke examined the contemporary lack of scientific knowledge about northern wildlife. In many ways, Clarke's ideas were ahead of his time. He argued for increased study and protection of caribou, abandoning preconceived ideas about predators, favoring native interests over those of whites in decisions regarding wildlife and discarding ineffectual and misguided wolf control programs. Clarke retired from the Civil Service in 1971, but not from his chosen profession. He served as Scientific Consultant of the Rachel Carson Institute, President of the North American Forestry Association, President and Honorary Member of The Wildlife Society, and Governor of the Arctic Institute. He also took four trips to East Africa to study in Kenya and Tanzania. As a writer of over 300 papers and articles, he was articulate, scientific, humorous, and philosophical.